

Captain Billie

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Josephine Sawyer Gates



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Captain Billie



The soldiers were soon huddled together
under the window (*Page 15*)

Captain Billie

Leads the Way to

The Land of "I Don't Want To"

By

Josephine Scribner Gates

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"Little Girl Blue," "Sunshine Annie"

Illustrated



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To
“Every little Jill and Jack who will
come back and live in
‘Want to’ Land”

ILLUSTRATIONS

The soldiers were soon huddled together under the window (<i>Page 15</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i> ✓
	FACING PAGE
“Here we will leave you; stay as long as you wish”	36 ✓
The baker didn’t want to bake	50 ✓
Captain Billie	86 ✓

ONCE upon a time in a deep dark wood, beside a silvery stream, there lived a queer little man. A very soldierly little fellow he was, and one morning he sat on a log, thinking deeply.

For some days he had been watching the sun, which, he felt, was behaving very strangely.

It didn't shine clear and bright as usual, and it seemed as though some little sprites might be holding blue-glass umbrellas before it

so that it cast cold blue rays instead of strong warm yellow ones.

The little fellow seemed to understand and, sighing deeply, arose, and at once a shrill whistle echoed and re-echoed through the forest.

Almost instantly there appeared many soldierly little fellows, who seemed almost to spring from the ground.

They gathered about their leader, gazing up at him in wonder.

“I have summoned you to say the time has come. You must be off. Are you willing and ready?”

“Indeed we are,” was the reply.
“Then to work!” cried the leader.



In his hand gleamed a silver key,
which he placed in a lock in the
side of a large rock.

A door swung open, and therein was to be seen a shining mass, pure white and glistening like frost in the sunlight.

“Fall to!” ordered the leader, and the little fellows labored with silver picks till each had broken off his portion.

The door closed and they all worked briskly. The birds in the trees watched closely to see presently that each little fellow was making a boat, a beautiful shining boat with masts and sails.

Then they saw that as soon as

one boat was finished, another was made, and the two were tied together and dragged to the stream. Then the little fellows returned for further orders.

“Don your suits of armor,” cried the leader, “fill your knapsacks, stock the hold of the boats with food and be off!”

The little men vanished, but shortly came back, robed in suits as pure and dazzlingly white as were the boats.

The Captain stepped forward, saluted, and asked:

“Your Majesty, is the enemy abroad?”

“The sun says so. Look for yourself.”

The Captain scanned the sky, then asked:

“What is it this time?”

“It seems to be the cry of ‘I don’t want to,’ and it must be banished. Go and do your best. Success to you!”

With another salute, the boats were quickly launched, and, with a shout, the soldiers sailed away.

The leader watched them out of

sight, and a pretty picture it was to see: the silvery stream, the over-



hanging trees, and the graceful little boats which, with sails spread, looked like great white sea gulls

skimming along, while the birds filled the air with joyous song.

Presently the stream widened, and on either shore were to be seen scattered cottages.

By this time the sun was low in the heavens, the birds had hushed their notes, darkness crept over the scene, and the sky was thickly dotted with stars.

The lights in the various homes shone bravely forth, and suddenly the shrill wail of a child rang out.

“Hark!” cried the Captain. All listened intently, and what *do* you

suppose they heard that child say? Just this—"I don't want to go to bed!"

It floated out the open window, across to the ears of these boatmen, and the Captain cried:

"Steer for the shore!"

The course of the boats was changed, and as they touched the land the soldiers leaped forth, and were soon huddled together under the window of this small boy's home.

He was still saying that he didn't want to go to bed, while his mother

was patiently trying to change his mind.

“Come,” whispered the Captain, and in a moment mother and Bobbie were surprised to see the room filled with tiny soldiers. So beautiful and bright were they, Bobbie stopped right in the middle of the oft-repeated wail—“I don’t want—”

“Come,” cried the Captain, “you must join the regiment.”

Bobbie blinked his eyes. He dearly loved to play soldier. Many times had he marched with the

boys, wearing a paper cap and shouldering a stick for a gun.

“Is it a real regiment?” he asked.

“A real regiment made up of all children who don't want to do various things. You don't want to go to bed, you say. Is that so?”

“Oh, yes,” cried Bobbie, “I never do want to go to bed.”

“Then if you join this regiment you will never need to go to bed nor do anything unless you want to.”

“How lovely!” Bobbie cried,

capering about. "May I go, Mother?"

Mother hardly knew what to say, but at a nod from the Captain, she gave her permission, and while Bobbie was getting ready she held a hasty confab with the odd little man, and was then perfectly satisfied with this strange performance. Bobbie wondered at the roguish twinkle in Mother's eyes as she bade him good-by, but he was so excited over it all he danced out of the house at the Captain's heels without a word.

“Do you know any more little boys who don’t want to go to bed?” the Captain asked.

“Stacks! In that house across the street lives Billie. He don’t want to do anything. Let’s get him and make him Captain.”

Billie was his bosom friend, and of course if there was to be such fun ahead as this soldier man said, Billie must come too, and since he was always the ringleader in everything, of course he must be Captain of this odd regiment, and Bobbie very eagerly led the way to Billie’s house.

“Hear him now?”

They all listened, and dear! dear! It was all true. Billie also was declaring just what Bobbie had: that he didn't want to go to bed.

The Captain disappeared, and soon returned with Captain Billie, who for a wonder did want to do something at last, and was wild over the thought of being able to order everybody about.

“Hullo!” cried Bobbie. “Isn't this great? We're going to be real soldiers and we're going where I believe we can do pretty much as we please.”

Captain Billie's big eyes stared at Bobbie and the shining soldiers awaiting him, but there was no time to talk it over, for the order—"Ready! Mark time! March!" now sounded in their ears.

As they tramped along, over and over came to their ears the same "I don't want to" cry, and each time the Captain brought forth a new recruit.

Not always were they boys, however, for there seemed to be many little girls, glad and eager to join this army, and presently a goodly

number marched along in the moonlight.

The Captain led them to a meadow just at the edge of town. Here he drilled them for awhile. Then they



sat around under the trees drowsily talking, till before they knew it they were all curled up in a heap fast asleep.

They were awakened by a bugle call, and they lay and listened to its echo.

Captain Billie, without opening his eyes, cried, "I don't want to get up."

The Captain laughed heartily as he said:

"Nobody asked you to. Lie there as long as you choose. I'm going back to the village and see

if there are any more who want to go with us," and with a wave of his hand he tramped away in the cool sweetness of the early morning.

He had hardly entered the village before he heard from various houses mothers calling, "Jack, Jill, Jimmie, Mamie, etc. It's time to get up." Then the drowsy reply, "I don't want to get up ye—et."

And so shortly Jimmie and Mamie, Jack and Jill were keeping step with the Captain. Not only these children, but Annie, Susie, Willie, Georgie—and dear me, there

seemed to be no end to the number who wanted to join the ranks.



The Captain led them to the meadow, drilled them with the others, and then they had a picnic dinner.

“Isn’t it fine!” cried one and another. “Seems as if we’re going to have a picnic all the time,” said Captain Billie.

“Won’t you tell us where we’re going?”

“Certainly,” replied the Captain, “we are going to the beautiful vil-
age of ‘I don’t want to!’ It is a
great place for you, because there
the people never do anything they
don’t want to. It’s a kind of ‘do
as you please’ place, and I believe it
is just what you want now.

“Presently I’m going back for one

more lot. At suppertime I expect there will be a few who would rather come with me than stay and be dressed for that occasion."

And sure enough, the first thing he heard on arriving in the village was: "Johnny, come," and the far-away reply, "I don't want to be dressed yet."

And so it happened that he brought back quite a few more romping children, who were welcomed with shouts and cheers.

The Captain's eyes twinkled, but his face was very grave as he mar-

shalled his forces to the water's edge, where they found the boats lazily rocking while waiting for the little passengers.

“Just one moment before we go,” said the Captain. “I have something to say to you.

“You know there are soldiers of one sort or another all over the world. They all have some special reason for being, and often they carry banners which show what their reasons are.

“My soldiers will now show you their banners,” and at a signal, the

little men held on high banners of pure white with these words in letters as blue as the sky—

“I want to.”

The children gazed at the magic words as the Captain continued:

“Now you also have a reason for being and must carry banners. Here they are. Take your choice.”

The children were wildly excited over this, and each sprang for a banner, but as they opened and read them, their cheeks grew very rosy. For a moment there was silence, then Bobbie seized one on

which he read, "I don't want to go to bed."

He waved it in the air, crying: "Hurrah! Here's the one for me. Come on, fellows, choose your colors. This is a great lark!"

Encouraged by this daring speech the children each sought a banner, and soon were marching about in the greatest glee, waving on high banners with various mottoes, such as: "I don't want to have my hair brushed." "I don't want to brush my teeth." "I don't want my nails cleaned." "I don't want to be

cleaned up.” While Captain Billie triumphed over all with the only



banner of its kind—"I don't want to do *anything*."

"Attention! Ready! Go!" ordered the Captain.

At this command they joyfully hopped into the little boats and were soon floating along on the rippling water.

Bobbie was much excited as he found himself in the Captain's boat, which headed the procession. It seemed almost too good to be true that so many children were on their way to the blissful land of "I don't want to," where they could do as they pleased.

“See the pond lillies!” he cried suddenly, and leaned far out to pluck one.

“Sit still!” cried the Captain.



“I don’t want to,” said Bobbie, and at that over he went. The water wasn’t very deep, but he was quite wet when he climbed aboard, and

wished he had wanted to obey. He looked back and chuckled to himself as he saw here and there other children falling overboard and struggling to get back in the boats.

If the sprites had more often lowered their blue-glass umbrellas from the sun's face the children would soon have been warm and dry, but these same little sprites seemed also to belong to this regiment, for the sun continued to shine blue and cold, and it was some time before the children could

watch in comfort for the promised land.

At eventide they landed. The Captain led them all to a fort. Here were snug little tents, where they found pillows and rugs, also cupboards well filled.

After supper the Captain said: "I and my men are going to bed. Good-night," and they disappeared.

The children stared at the flapping curtains, and presently by the heavy breathing they knew the little men were fast asleep.

"How grand!" whispered Bobbie,

“that we don’t have to go to bed!”

“Of course we don’t have to, but I’m going, for I’m sleepy,” said Elsie, as she crept into her little tent after sticking her little banner up in front, where it fluttered in the moonlight all night long.

One by one the others followed suit, and Bobbie couldn’t resist the temptation, for he was very sleepy.

They were awake at dawn, and eager to be off, and after a hearty breakfast were again on the way.

“Soon you’ll see the country you long for,” said the Captain, and



“Here we will leave you; stay as long as you wish”

after some hours sailing the boats again touched land, and the children fairly tumbled over one another as they leaped from the boats and were led by the Captain to a great arch over which was written—

“Welcome to ‘I Don’t Want To
Land.’”

“This is the entrance to the village,” said the Captain. “Here we will leave you; stay as long as you choose, but listen well to what I am about to say. If the time ever comes when you want to go back

we will come and take you. No one else has power to take you away from here, but you must stay just as long as you want to carry those banners.”

“That will be forever!” cried Captain Billie, wildly hopping about, “so don’t bother about us.”

“How can we let you know if we should want to go?” asked one little maid a bit wistfully.

“Oh,” replied the Captain, “you won’t have to let me know. I have a messenger who never fails me. The moment you want me, I’ll be on the spot. Now good-by.”

Then to his soldiers he shouted:
“About face! Ready! March!”

The children watched till they could no longer see the little white messengers fluttering in the air like flying birds hovering over the line of dazzling white dots. Then curious to see what was now in store for them, they went through the entrance and up the street.

It seemed a village very like their own home place. The houses even seemed the same, and suddenly, to Bobbie's delight, he saw at the door of one his own dear mother.

“Looks just like our house, and there’s my mother!” he cried, as he fairly flew along to greet her with outstretched arms. He put up his lips to kiss her, but to his surprise she seemed not especially overjoyed to see him.

He went into the house and looked around. It *was* like his home, only there seemed to be something wrong. He couldn’t just tell what, but it was different. Not warm and cozy, but dark and cold and uncomfortable.

He went out and sat down on the

steps to think it over, and noticed across the street Captain Billie on his steps, thinking busily.



Presently Bobbie cried, "Come on over."

“I don’t want to,” said Captain Billie, “you come over here.”

“I don’t want to,” echoed Bobbie, and they both shouted with laughter.

Bobbie presently walked slowly across and seated himself beside Captain Billie.

“Great place, isn’t it? That’s just like our house at home, and it’s my mother all right, but she didn’t seem very glad to see me.”

“Mine either,” replied Captain Billie. “There’s something in the air here. I don’t know if I like it, but I can’t explain what it is.”

“I thought so too, but never mind, it’s going to be great. Why, Captain Billie, we don’t have to do *anything*. We can throw our coats and caps any old place ; we needn’t clean the mud off our shoes ; we’ll never have to be careful of the tablecloth, so we can eat our meals in peace ; and best of all we can eat between meals every minute.”

“Hurrah! Welcome to the new land!” and with a vigorous stroke on Bobbie’s shoulder, Captain Billie cried: “Come on, let’s begin the fun. Forward, march to the cookie crock!”

The cookie crock, usually filled and running over, they found as empty as Old Mother Hubbard's cupboard.



“Pr’haps Mother don’t know it,” and he called up the stairway: “Mother, did you know we were out of cookies?”

“Yes,” drawled Mother, in a tone very unlike her usual brisk way of speaking.

“Aren’t you going to make some?”

“No, I don’t want to,” was the faraway reply.

“Bread and butter would do,” whispered Bobbie. “Spread it thick with brown sugar.”

The boys again went to the pan-

try, but the breadbox too was empty. All they could find was a few cold scraps left from the day before.

“Come on over to our house,” said Bobbie; “our pantry’s always full of good things.”

They shot across the street, into the house to that pantry, but found that also empty.

Bobbie’s mother was upstairs reading, and after a few moments Bobbie ventured to mention that he was hungry. Mother smiled sweetly but continued her story.

“Won’t Father be coming soon?”
he asked politely.

“I suppose so, if he wants to.”

“Aren’t you going to get dinner?”



“ Oh, no, I don't want to. There's plenty of cold stuff. I guess you won't starve.”

The boys tiptoed out of the room, down the stairs, and Bobbie went to the mantel for his bank.

“ You run get some pennies, too, and let's go to the bake shop,” he said, and shortly they were racing down the street, the pennies rattling as they ran.

“ There's Jimmy and Johnny, and my goodness, look on the other side. There are all the children who came with us.

“Hi, there, Jimmie, wait for us.”

“I don’t want to,” cried Jimmie.

The boys hurried to join their mates, and found them all on the way to the bake shop for food. But dear! dear! what do you s’pose? Not a bun, not a cake, not anything could they find.

When they asked the clerks to sell them food, they merely smiled and said, “We don’t want to, we haven’t any, anyhow. The baker didn’t want to bake.”

They hastened to the grocer shop, and there found the place as empty as the cupboards.

“Haven’t you anything to eat?” they asked.

“Why no,” was the reply. “I don’t want to go to the country to get it, and the farmers don’t want to bring it in.”

Much discouraged they sought a candy shop, where just to look at the well-filled shelves usually made their mouths water, but here also they found no one. No candy, and not even a clerk to tell them he didn’t want to sell it.

“Dear! dear!” cried Bobbie, “I s’pose no one wants to make it.



The baker didn't want to bake

This is a queer sort of place. I can't see why any one wants to live here. Now look in that post office. The men are just sitting around half asleep."

"Let's go in and see if we have any letters."

They crowded in, to find a dreadful state of affairs back of the tiny windows. The floor was covered with mail sacks, and packages were strewn about in the greatest disorder.

Bobbie ventured to ask if they weren't going to deliver the mail,

to which question the clerk replied :
“Oh, no. We don't want to.”

“Well,” cried Captain Billie,
“there's a letter in our box, won't
you give it to me?”

“Oh, no. I don't even want to
open that sack and look over that
mail. This place is perfectly great!”
he cried, as he threw himself on
the floor, and with his head on the
mail bag was soon fast asleep.

“Oh!” cried Betty. “How
dreadful! We can't even have our
valentines on Valentine's Day. I
always get bushels of them.”

This was a sad state of affairs indeed, they all decided as they walked on.



“See, Betty, in the toy store. See that new kind of doll. Isn’t she dear? Let’s go and look at

her.” The girls followed Elsie in, to stand on tiptoe before the counter, while they asked to see the new dolls.

The clerk turned his head in surprise, and replied:

“Oh my! I don’t *want* to show dolls to-day.”

The girls walked out with blazing cheeks and eyes flashing fire. *Never* were they so mistreated. They found the children shouting and dancing before some billboards.

“Hi there! a circus! Look at

the animals in the cages! Can't you almost hear them roar? And see the trick ponies, aren't they great? And the splendid steam piano, and oh! see that bareback rider! She's a stunner, I can tell by the way she stands on her toes. "We'll go, and we can have a balloon; they are great fun."

"Hark! Hear the music," chorused the crowd. "It's the circus parade. Look, it's just beyond the entrance!"

With one accord they started for the scene of action, but in a moment

they found the procession had changed its mind and was going the other way.

“They’ve turned around! They don’t want to parade,” declared Bobbie, much dismayed.

“Come on, I’m going back home.”

They walked silently along till suddenly they heard horses clattering lickity-cut down the street. A horn blew a terrific blast and a splendid tallyho drew up and stopped beside the curb.

“Look at the horses, eight of

'em and see the plumes nodding on their heads. "Hear their chains clank. My! I wonder what they are for!" said Captain Billie.

"For you," cried the driver. "Take you right to the circus grounds for only a nickel. We can catch the parade if we hurry."

The children clambered in. Such a chance for a lovely ride they never had, and they were bubbling over with joy as the horses started and away they went, while the blast of the horn echoed and re-echoed far down the street.

All seemed well at last, but what *do* you s'pose? They had only gone a short distance when those eight splendid beautiful horses stopped their prancing and dancing and refused to budge an inch.

The driver turned pale, and said sadly:

“No use. You may as well get down. They don't want to go any farther.”

As the children walked away Captain Billie cried:

“Come on over on the green and let's talk this over. I think it's

dreadful. We can't stand this sort of thing much longer!"

Captain Billie was usually *the* boy of the town. Every one followed him about and was always ready to follow his lead. Now, to his surprise, he found himself sitting down under a tree alone.

"Oh, I forgot. They don't want to, I suppose," he said to himself.

"Well, I'm hungry. My garden ought to be started by this time. Maybe I can find something to eat there."

The garden was as bad as all the

other things. Nothing was growing but weeds, and the ground was hard and dry.



“I remember,” he sighed, “I didn’t want to weed nor water it.

“It don’t want to rain, and the sun

just won't shine as it ought to, so of course the things don't want to grow."

He went into the house and found some cold scraps awaiting him on the table. As he ate he thought of the good dinner his mother usually cooked, and he sighed heavily.

He glanced at his banner which he had stuck up on end in a corner, and the words staring at him sent him to a seat in the window. Here he sat and gazed unseeingly up the street.

He was suddenly startled by a

glad shout, and there was Bobbie dancing a hornpipe under his window.

“Come on,” he cried excitedly. “Betty’s invited us all to a party. She couldn’t mail the invitations because—you know why, so we’re helping her invite. At last we’re going to have some fun.”

Captain Billie was so delighted he sprang out the window, and with a wild cry of joy he followed Bobbie to the village green, where they found the children assembled.

Betty Black’s parties were always

a joy. Every child in the village might have a party, and they would have a glorious time at every one, but when Betty Black had one—well, it was just like a real show and a pretend one. No one ever could get up such refreshments as Betty's mother did, and so no wonder the children stood on their heads and turned cart wheels and did all sorts of gymnastics on the way to Betty's.

Suddenly Elsie shouted, "Who's that comin' down the street? Looks like Betty."

"'Tis Betty," declared Bobbie.

“She’s coming to tell us about that lovely ice cream and chocolate cake.”

And sure enough it was Betty— Betty with hair unbrushed, face unwashed, and soiled dress.

“Why, Betty!” cried Janie, “we’re all comin’ to your party. Were you going some place and did you forget you were going to have it?”

“Oh, no,” cheerily remarked Betty, “I’m not going to have it.”

“I thought so,” whispered one and another. “Who ever *had* a party looking as she does?”

“Oh,” laughed sharp-eared Betty,
“I guess no one ever did, and who
ever *went* to a party looking as you
do?”

The children stopped and stared.
Then one and another began to
straighten out hair with fingers, and
wipe faces with soiled handker-
chiefs, and smooth down their
dresses.

One little girl found a large leaf
and was trying to clean her shoes,
when Betty laughed merrily and
cried :

“Oh, don't bother. We are

frights, every one of us, but that isn't why I'm not to have the party. It's the biggest joke you ever heard. Mother didn't want to get ready for the party, but she loves it as much as we do, and she finally changed her mind and went to work. She started to make a cake and found no eggs, and what do you s'pose? It's too funny! there isn't a hen in this town that will lay an egg. They don't want to, you see. Then she couldn't make ice cream, because the cows also have joined the regiment. They don't want to give milk.

“So how can I have a party? A party isn't a party without ice cream and cake.



“I think we better make the hens and cows some banners. Wouldn't they look funny marching through the streets!”

The children shouted over this, all except Bobbie, who cried:

“This is a fine place to live in! It isn't funny a bit. Everything goes wrong and I don't like it.

“We couldn't even go out and see the circus tents just because the horses didn't want to go. Better let them join your animal army, too. Now we can't have the party. Nothing is nice like it used to be.

“Let's stand these banners in a row. We ought to be made to stand in front of them and stare at those words forever!”

As Bobbie spoke he stuck the banners in the ground, where they cheerfully waved, till Betty pulled them all down and threw them in a heap, then cried :

“Come on, let’s go to the circus and forget the party and everything.”

“How can we? The horses won’t take us,” chorused the whole regiment.

“We can walk. Perhaps our mothers will go too.”

They all vanished at this suggestion, and soon appeared with their

mothers, who for a wonder *wanted* to go.

The circus grounds were not so very far away, and our little band trudged along, delighted that at last there was something they could do.

As they neared the tent they found



it very exciting. Men were shouting all about the wonders of this unusual circus, and the children hurried in to see the animals.

They found the creatures all curled up in balls, and the keepers poking them in vain. They just wouldn't move, and he finally gave up in despair.

“They don't want to show off,” he announced. “I'm sorry, but I can't help it,” then continued—
“The performance is about to begin; get your seats.”

This cry sent them all into the big

tent, and wildly excited they were as they found their seats near the opening into the dressing-room.

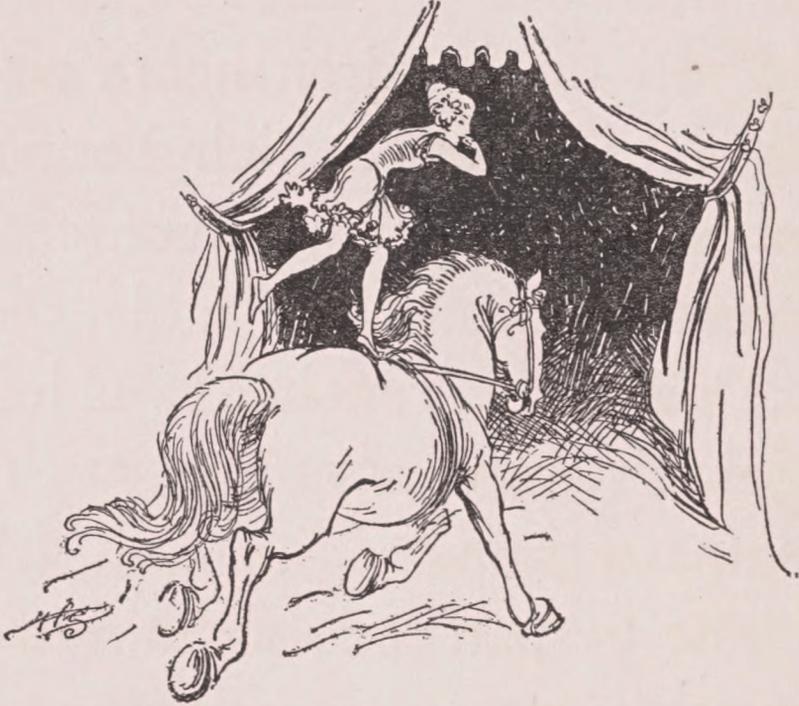
“Isn’t it grand!” said Captain Billie. “We can see them before they even come out. They look so fine when they know they are going to burst upon us all in a moment.”

For sometime they sat expectantly waiting. Suddenly the bandmaster held up his hand to wave the signal to begin. The men held their horns ready to blow, the drummer poised his sticks on high ready to pound

on the big drum, the violinists seemed about to draw their bows across the strings, when lo and behold! all the children heard was a chorus of voices which sounded like a school, only instead of repeating the multiplication table, these voices said very, very hard and loud "I don't want to play." The bandmaster, much disturbed, tried his best to persuade them, but of no use. They just wouldn't.

"Wind up the steam piano," he cried. "The horses won't come without music," and so in a moment

the big pipe wagon was sending out its shrieking tones, and the



horses with their spangled riders appeared trotting gracefully around the sawdust ring. Only once around,

however, for they suddenly veered as they neared the entrance, then vanished.

Every one stared. Such a circus! No music, and the grand entrance only once around instead of three times!

“Well, here comes the bareback rider, let’s see what she can do!” some one said.

The bespangled glittering fairy-like creature appeared only to disappear, for after a breathless moment of seeing her poised on one foot and seeming about to fly, she

turned her horse about, and wafting a kiss toward her audience, she was seen no more.

Then came the clown. He was always the life of the circus. Now they could eat peanuts and popcorn while they listened to his funny jokes.

They settled down as though their waiting was over, but dear me! It had only just begun, for do you know what he did? He walked solemnly out, bowed profoundly, and with hand on high, as though waiting for rapt attention, he

whined: "I don't want to," and he, too, disappeared.

The children had hardly gotten over their disappointment, when the ponies, all wearing glittering coats of many colors, trotted playfully in to trot playfully out. "No tricks to-day," they seemed to say. "We don't want to do them."

The manager then appeared and started to make a speech, but he also bowed to the ground and cried the same old story, and the audience rose and left the place.

No one understood it except the

villagers we know who came from
“I don’t want to” land.

“You see,” cried Bobbie, as they passed out, “they couldn’t really help it. Their tent was pitched on the land that belongs to the village. If they had only known and placed it over the line it would have been all right. It’s a shame! There was a perfectly good circus wasted!”

They were soon at home crying for supper, but, dear! dear! the mothers still didn’t want to get it.

Therefore Bobbie decided to get something to eat himself. The

first thing to do was to build the fire. Of course the woodbox was empty, because he had always declared he didn't want to fill it when mother asked him to. So he had to go out to the shed for wood. He laid the fire and struck a match. It flared and went out. Another did the same, the third caught, but the wood didn't want to burn.

Bobbie was almost in despair when he came across a loaf of bread, some cookies, a pie and some cold meat. How it got there he didn't know, but there was a feast indeed ;

and he hastened to set the table,
and when he had the supper ready



he rang the bell loud enough for
the whole village to hear.

“Well,” said Mother, as she and
Father seated themselves, “I’m glad

somebody wanted to get supper. I just didn't want to, but I am hungry as a bear."

Bobbie was too busy eating to reply, and soon after supper sought his little bed.

He wasn't the only child who got supper that night, nor the only one to go to bed without a word.

Indeed the whole village retired quietly, and the next morning the children arose without being asked to, and bathed, dressed, brushed teeth and hair. Then came down to breakfast on time; but only the

children were there, and no breakfast in sight!

No one dared call the parents, for they had heard all they wanted to hear of that dreadful "I don't want to."

And so while they waited they became very busy. They filled woodboxes and swept walks and porches. The little girls were as busy as the boys with their little brooms.

Toys were put in place, doll houses were tidied up, bedrooms were made so very neat you would hardly have known them.

Coats and hats were hung away where they belonged, and finally when the mothers appeared, and the children were called to break-



fast, a glad army they were, indeed.

When breakfast was over, after helping all they could, the various children gathered on the village green, so spick and span, and so happy were they, one would hardly have known them.

“There is just one ‘I don’t want to,’ I want to say,” cried Bobbie. “I don’t want to stay in this land any longer. What can we do about it?”

“We can’t stay when we don’t want to, but how *can* we let the Captain know we want him to take us away?”

“See, the sun is shining!” cried Elsie. “He said there would be a way to know, and I believe that is it.”

“Oh, look! there come the dear little soldiers now!” shouted Captain Billie.

The children began to hop, skip and jump towards their longed-for friends, and with outstretched arms the Captain greeted them.

“Good morning! My faithful messenger brought me the good news that you wanted me; therefore I am here.”

“Oh, *was* it the sun who told you?” asked Elsie earnestly.

“It was, my dear. You know the sun never shines in this village unless there are some ‘I want to’s.’

“It spoils it all for this place to have them about. You can see at once how it changes everything.

“If the sun shines, the flowers and vegetables want to grow, and the rain wants to fall. It’s funny how catching it is. The cows want to give their milk ; the hens want to lay. Every one begins to want to do this and that, and of course



Captain Billie

then it isn't an 'I don't want to' land.

“So the very moment I saw the sun I summoned my men. Are you quite sure you want to go away from here?” he asked, with a keen glance at the faces upturned like so many blossoms.

“Oh, yes!” they chorused. “Do take us, please.”

“Then the banners may stay here and I will give you others. I think now you are ready to carry some like ours.”

“Indeed we are. Do you think we can be good enough?” they wistfully asked. 87

“Of course you can, and here they are.”



The children caught them up, and wildly waved them on high, cheering and shouting as they marched along.

They found the little white boats awaiting them, and were soon floating along on the placid surface of the water toward their own dear homes.

The air was filled with the perfume of the water lilies, and by and by they heard the music of voices of rare sweetness that seemed to come from amid the branches of the overhanging trees.

The chorus swelled louder and louder, till presently the soldier children found themselves singing too. Although they had never heard

the song, it seemed as though they had always known it. It sounded as glad as they felt, and if you will listen for a moment, you too will be singing it, while you wave on high *your* banner with the magic words.

You will sing it on the sunshiny days and on the days when the sun



is so polite he hides away because the rain wants to fall and give the flowers a drink. You will sing it always and forever.

Why? Because you can't help it!

You just *want* to! Learn it and see!

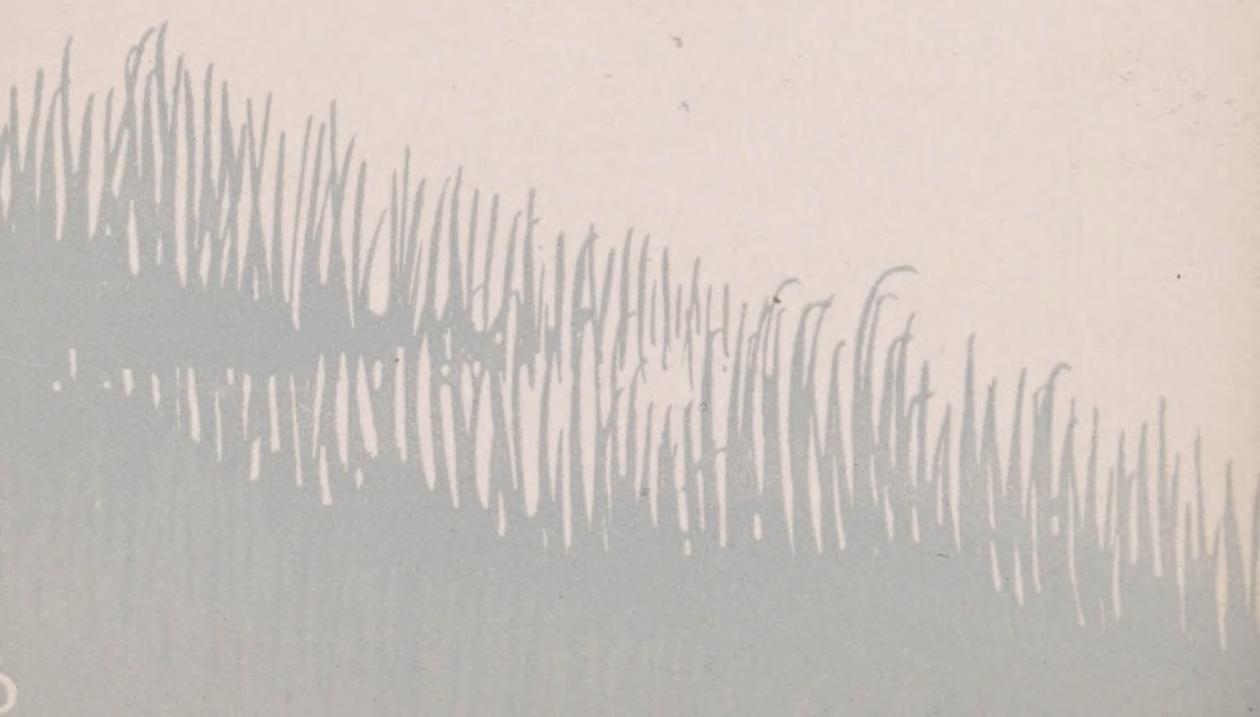
"I WANT TO"

march with col - ors gay, O Jill, O Jack, Please

The first system of music consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody begins with a quarter note G4, followed by quarter notes A4 and B-flat4, then a dotted quarter note C5, and continues with quarter notes B-flat4, A4, G4, F4, and E4. The middle staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat, providing a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat, providing a bass line with chords and moving lines.

do come back And stay in "Want to" land.

The second system of music also consists of three staves. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The melody continues with quarter notes D4, C4, B-flat4, A4, G4, F4, and E4. The middle staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one flat, and the bottom staff is a bass clef with a key signature of one flat, both providing harmonic accompaniment. The system concludes with a double bar line.





22

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